

Barn Close Development

Residents in the Barn Close area opened their morning post at the beginning of August, to find an invitation to a meeting in the Village Hall. Taffel Enterprises were putting on a public exhibition from 3.30pm – 7.30pm on Tuesday 17th August to show their latest plans to redevelop the field behind the telephone box. The exhibition was to be held prior to the submission of a planning application.

After having been refused permission and lost two appeals last year, Taffel are shortly to put in for another scheme which they say takes on board the previous rulings and tries harder to accommodate the wishes of local residents. The purpose of the event in the village hall was to ensure that residents were aware of the plans and make any fine tuning to the planning application before submission to Torridge District Council.

Representing Taffel were Steve Houkes and Kimberley Graham of Nex Communications, retained to host the event and look after consultation and public affairs etc. Also present was Victor Maskell of Narracotts, the new architects retained by Taffel, and Adam Davis with project management responsibilities.

There were several drawings of the site, with plan views and also elevations showing what the new houses would look like. In addition there were detailed floor plans of all of the house types. The type of dwelling ranges from single bedroom flats to four bedroom houses. In all, there are nineteen 3-bed and six 4-bed open market houses, with seven Affordable Homes which will comprise one 3-bed home, one 2-bed home, four 1-bed flats and one 2-bed flat.

After the exhibition, Narracotts wrote to say that they had invited 53 residents, the District Councillor and the County Councillor, and all fifteen members of the Planning Committee at Torridge District Council. In the event, 58 residents came, so did the District Councillor, and several Parish Councillors too.

The general feeling is that residents were very positive about the design and appearance of the development. Several said they felt it reflected the character of the area, unlike other recent developments, and it would be sympathetic to existing properties in the village. Most of the criticisms related to car parking and the impact on traffic levels and local amenities. Other concerns were risks of flooding, the inability of the sewage works to cope, and some properties losing privacy.

We heard later from Nex that Narracotts have been able to incorporate some of the public's comments, and particularly the amount of off-street parking has been increased. Some dwellings already had 2 spaces allocated and now those that had fewer have been increased to 2. Privacy has been improved, too. A deft flick of the draughtsman's eraser (*well that's how it was done in my day –Ed.*) and windows have been repositioned to avoid looking into adjacent gardens.

STOP PRESS: The Parish Council meets on Wednesday 27th September to consider the planning application and give its comments to Torridge District Council.